

AGENDA – COLLABORATIVE ACTION MEETING

Solano Local Food System Alliance

Thursday, September 7, 4:00 – 5:30 pm

via Zoom

Attending:

- Priscilla Yeane, assistant agricultural commissioner, Ag Department
- Daniela Reagan, new deputy agricultural commissioner, Ag Department
- Olivia Henry, Regional Food Systems Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension
- Paula Schnese, Cultivate Community Food Co-op
- Jahniah McGill, supervisor at consumer protection, Solano County
- Robin Cox, Senior Health Services Manager, Solano Public Health
- Maggie Kolk, Sustainable Solano
- Tracy Ellison, Solano Land Trust
- Kimber Smith, community member
- Rose Loveall, Pleasant Valley Ag Association, Morningsun Herb Farm
- Mike Ioakimedes, community member
- Lisa Murray, PVAA, Ag & Art magazine/film festival
- Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano
- Stephanie Oelsligle Jordan, Sustainable Solano
- Allison Nagel, Sustainable Solano

Action items from the meeting:

- Finalize and post approved charter
- Start a Google Doc for planning the Nov. 2 educational session around how ag land becomes a city. Alliance members will add names and suggested contacts for speakers.
- Logo discussion to return to Steering Committee
- Share urban ag efforts and ideas with Sustainable Solano for grant application

Meeting Minutes

Finalizing Charter document (All)

Action: Approved with minor changes (7-0 with 3 abstentions)

Finalized document attached

Vote to approve:

- Solano Land Trust: Yes
- Rose Loveall: Yes

- Solano Public Health: Yes
- Cultivate Community Food Co-op: Yes
- Mike Ioakimedes: Yes
- Kimber Smith: Yes
- Sustainable Solano: Yes
- Jahniah McGill: Abstain
- Ag Department: Abstain
- Olivia Henry: Abstain

Flannery & Associates: “California Forever” (All)

Action: Determined that the Alliance would continue to gather information and would focus on education around how zoning and planning decisions are made. The Nov. 2 Alliance educational meeting will center around the question of: How does ag land become a city?

Alliance members determined that the Alliance would not take a position on Flannery & Associates or their proposed plan at this time.

Discussion:

There’s not enough information to comment on yet. While farmland protection is part of the Alliance’s work, there hasn’t been any change in the designation of the land and Flannery hasn’t discussed it with county officials yet.

Some concern that Flannery may plan to “buy votes” to move its plans forward.

Solano Land Trust is in an information-gathering mode. A lot of the habitat and land owned by SLT shares fencelines with the purchased properties.

The [press release from the county](#) was very informative.

Seeing what the next steps will be for the Farm Bureau.

Priscilla Yeane relayed the update that was given by the county at a public Solano County Water Agency meeting:

Flannery, an LLC, has purchased about 52,000 acres, offering high value with limited-term leases (10-15 years for some, and others were given a lifetime to continue to farm). There have been reports on some restrictions on farming: a lot of the land is grazing land where owners have put biosolids/amendments into the soil – now some people are saying they’ve been told not to do that anymore. There is an active lawsuit against multiple owners for conspiring to inflate profits.

There was a Daily Republic article that included the response of ranchers.

Lisa Murray was considering having a town hall one night during the Ag & Art Film Festival to have discussion around Flannery and land use. It was determined that it was too soon to get knowledgeable speakers.

There is a need to focus on the bigger plan/systemic plans for the county. You can't talk about housing or preservation without talking about ag land. The county has an orderly growth initiative that was incorporated into the General Plan, which is in place until 2028. There's a need to educate people about it, and the Flannery situation creates the opportunity to talk about the future of Solano County now that people are paying attention. Solano has green space between cities because that's what voters wanted.

Conversation should be around what voters want. Are there infill opportunities? Why couldn't Silicon Valley dollars go to support that type of development in Fairfield or Vallejo? Comparison of Oakland, with unguided growth, and Emeryville where the city worked with developers to target growth.

Discussion coalesced around whether the Alliance could hold a series of conversations.

If the county receives the Sustainable Ag Land Conservation funding to develop the vision in the county, it will be important to have these community conversations to know the vision for the community. The Alliance can hold those without taking a position, but to facilitate the conversation.

Many questions already: source of water; what sort of mitigation would be asked if this goes forward; could ag easements have protected these lands; why Solano County? Why did they think it would work here?; what about the infrastructure needed (Highway 12) and proximity to the air base; what happens if someone wants to buy and develop land (eg. Like how a bill becomes a law – a step-by-step through the process, from purchase, through rezoning to development)

Nov. 2 educational forum would bring together experts in the field to help answer questions and start visioning process. Suggested that Allan Calder return to answer questions, bring in someone from the orderly growth committee (Marilyn Farley, Bob Burman, Mike Zeiss), possibly Solano Land Trust to discuss ag easements or Greenbelt Alliance on policy and advocacy; Bill Emlen voice of county with a background in resource management; past mayor of West Sacramento, Christopher Cabaldon (Maggie Kolk will approach him about panel); a farmer or landowner. [The Alliance suggested creating a Google Doc for sharing possible speakers and brainstorming.]

It will be important to have ground rules and focus the conversation on education about land use processes (not specifically about Flannery). Also important that there be adequate time for speakers – which is why a series could allow more time for speakers to share from their specialized expertise.

SALC has conserved a lot of land through easements and focuses on preserving ag land and supporting infill development. In one move, Flannery knocked out about 1/3 of the progress made and has raised concerns about more miles travelled, pollution, water requirements, etc.

CDFA Urban Ag grant & Alliance Letter of Support

Elena Karoulina spoke about Sustainable Solano's application to support [urban agriculture through CDFA funding](#) that would serve as a catalyst for urban ag in the county and would allow SuSol to pass through money for projects, including community gardens and other urban ag projects.

Alliance members are asked to share any interesting urban ag projects people are doing or would want to do in the county. Sustainable Solano will return to the Alliance later to request a letter of support for the grant submission.

**

Meeting Schedule for remainder of 2023 (all Thursdays):

- 9/14, 5 pm – Steering Committee
- 10/12, 5 pm – Steering Committee
- 11/2, 4 pm – Educational Forum
- 11/9, 5 pm – Steering Committee
- 12/7, 4 pm – Collaborative Action
- 12/14, 5 pm - Steering Committee

Goals for 2023 (as discussed at the January, 2023 Executive Committee meeting):

- 1. Create a Charter for the Alliance**
 - a. Charter would determine how the Alliance could take a position on certain topics/make decisions, how communication would be handled between meetings, etc.
- 2. Plan and hold a strategic planning workshop & party**
- 3. Encourage cross-promotion & promotion of the Alliance** by Alliance members (to increase Alliance brand recognition)
- 4. Continue Education for the Alliance.** Arrange special guest speakers for each general Alliance meeting with topics relevant to local food system. These meetings are open to the public, but they are in “listen only” mode. 2023 educational ideas are:
 - a. Feb 2 = Medically Tailored Meals (MTM)
 - b. May 4 = The Farm Bill
 - c. Aug 3 = (N/A - Focused on the Charter)
 - d. Nov 2 = TBD